

The University of Chicago

THE ADEQUACY OF THE GENERAL  
EDUCATION PROGRAM IN LOCAL  
PUBLIC JUNIOR COLLEGES

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE  
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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# General Education in Public Junior Colleges

JAMES W. REYNOLDS

THE PUBLICATION during the summer of 1945 of the report of the Harvard Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society<sup>1</sup> marks a significant development in the study of this phase of curriculum organization. As judged by the many reviews of this report in professional and non-professional periodicals, the reception accorded it varies all the way from warm praise to severe criticism.

Junior college leaders who subscribe to the theory that one of the major functions of this level of schooling is that of rounding out general education, a theory advocated by such forerunners of the junior college movement as Tappan<sup>2</sup> and Folwell<sup>3</sup> and a theory seen to exist in the stated purposes of junior colleges by such studies as those of Koos in 1921,<sup>4</sup> Campbell in 1930,<sup>5</sup> and Hilton and Carpenter in 1943,<sup>6</sup> may be inclined to subscribe to the sentiments of Arthur B. Moehlman. Writing in *Nations Schools* concerning the Harvard report, Moehlman says:<sup>7</sup>

There are shortcomings in the report. Too much emphasis is placed upon the conventional 8-4-4 graduate school scheme instead of the emerging six or eight year elementary school, the eight year secondary school through grade 14 at community level and the subsequent need for drastic reorganization of the conventional liberal arts college. There is also too little understanding of the American public school as a partnership among parents, state, and community.

JAMES W. REYNOLDS has been professor of education at the University of Georgia since September 1945, having served for the previous eight years as dean of Fort Smith Junior College, Arkansas. This article, which is the first of a series of two by Dr. Reynolds to appear in the *Journal*, results from a study he made in the course of work on his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago, received this past year.

In line with the implications inherent in Moehlman's statement, the writer had occasion during the autumn of 1944 to study the policy of public junior colleges toward general education. A grant from the General Education Board made possible visiting 40 such institutions, all but two of which were publicly controlled. In 32 of the public junior colleges, an intensive study of the school's policy was made through (1) examining the records of graduates, (2) conferences with administrative and faculty members, and (3) reading published and unpublished statements made by those empowered to speak authoritatively concerning this matter. The major portion of the study dealt with the records of graduates. Conclusions suggested by these records were modified by the second and third techniques listed above.

The principal element sought in the records of junior college graduates

<sup>1</sup> *General Education in a Free Society*, Harvard Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society (Harvard University Press, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> Henry P. Tappan, *University Education* (George B. Putnam, New York, 1851), pp. 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> William Watts Folwell, *University Addresses* (H. W. Wilson Company, Minneapolis, 1909), p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard V. Koos, "Current Conceptions of the Special Purposes of the Junior College," *School Review* (September 1921), 29:522.

<sup>5</sup> Doak S. Campbell, *A Critical Study of the Stated Purposes of the Junior College* (George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, 1930), p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> Wallace A. Hilton and W. W. Carpenter, "Stated Purposes of Junior Colleges," *Journal of Higher Education* (February 1943), 14:101-02.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur B. Moehlman, "Education in a Free Society," *Nations Schools* (October 1945), 36:19.

was a pattern of course objectives which would characterize the work done by these individuals. This involved identifying the courses recurring most frequently in the permanent records of those who were graduated, discovering the stated objectives of these courses, and checking with junior college faculty members on the authenticity of the statement of course objectives.

The writer recognizes from experience and observation that frequently there is a discrepancy between stated course objectives and actual outcomes of the learning experiences included in the course and measured by changes in the behavior of the student—in other words, course content. The thesis, however, seems sound which assigns stated course objectives an integral relationship to institutional policy, especially when the pattern of objectives is identified on the basis of the records of the institution's graduates. It seems inconceivable that a junior college would depart far from its actual policies (though these may be at variance with the stated policies) in approving for graduation a student whose record is inclusive of course objectives not in harmony with the fundamental values to which the college adheres.

The pattern of course objectives was analyzed to determine that portion of it definable as general education. This analysis involved the procuring of definitions not only for general education, but for preparatory and vocational education as well. On the basis of these three definitions a classification was made of all the course objectives which constituted the pattern. As a precaution against error a careful check of the reliability of the definitions was employed.

The next step in the intensive study

of college course objectives involved an attempt to discover their comprehensiveness as measured by an acceptable program of general education. A careful investigation of extant statements of programs of general education led to the selection for criterional purposes of the Objectives of General Education for Members of the Armed Forces.<sup>8</sup> This list best fitted the need growing out of this phase of the study.

The comprehensiveness of the pattern of course objectives identified in the records of junior college graduates was compared with the comprehensiveness of the pattern described in the criterional list. Since the Objectives of General Education for Members of the Armed Forces is made up of 193 stated objectives, classified under ten major divisions of general education, and each division subdivided into knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and attitudes and appreciations, a more detailed analysis was possible.

Finally, before reporting the results of the analysis, one additional aspect of the study must be described. Previous to the investigation reported here the writer had made an informal examination of the effect of graduating in certain special curriculums on the individual's pattern of general education. Sufficient effect was discovered to lead to the hypothesis that the curriculum in which the junior college student was graduated would be a significant determinant of the amount of general education the student would receive. Acting on this hypothesis, course records were examined with particular reference to the following curriculums:

<sup>8</sup> *A Design for General Education*, pp. 31-50. American Council on Education Studies, Reports of Committees and Conferences, Series I, No. 18, Washington: American Council on Education, 1944.



Arts and science, general cultural, general business, secretarial science, and technology.

The report of the results of this study of the objectives of courses taken by the students at the junior college level provides answers for two questions. These are:

1. How comprehensive is the program of general education taken by junior college students?

2. In what areas of general education do the greatest inadequacies exist?

A summary of the results concerning the first question is given in the following figures on the over-all adequacy of the general education content of five curriculums:

| <i>Curriculum</i>        | <i>Total possible score</i> | <i>Total score</i> | <i>Per cent</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Arts and science . . . . | 5,983                       | 600                | 10.5            |
| General cultural . . . . | 3,088                       | 258                | 8.0             |
| General business . . . . | 3,281                       | 270                | 8.0             |
| Secretarial science . .  | 5,211                       | 418                | 8.0             |
| Technology . . . . .     | 1,544                       | 66                 | 4.5             |
| All five curriculums     | 19,107                      | 1,612              | 8.5             |

The statistical entries above were obtained in the following manner. As has been mentioned above, the criterional list contains 193 statements of course objectives. The ten major divisions of general education observed by this list are not uniform in the number of objectives occurring under each. For example, there are 21 objectives under the first division, health; 23 under the second, communications; etc. Moreover, the number of schools upon which the study of each of the curriculums is based varies. Thirty-one schools are included in the study of arts and science, 27 under secretarial science, 17 under general business, 16 under general cultural, and 8 under technology. These numbers were determined on the basis of the number of schools among the 32 studied inten-

sively which had usable records of graduates in the respective curriculums.

Taking the technology curriculum for example, the assumption was made that a completely comprehensive program of general education would exist if each of the eight junior colleges represented insisted that the majority of their graduates take courses whose stated objectives include those which correspond with each of the 193 objectives in the criterional list. On this basis the total possible score for the over-all adequacy of the general education program in the technology curriculum becomes 193 multiplied by eight, or 1,544.

To compute the actual score, the course objectives of the most frequently recurring courses of each of the eight colleges offering a technology curriculum were compared with the 193 objectives in the criterional list and examples of coincidence were noted and counted. For example, one college might have course objectives coinciding with 85 of the 193, while another would have only 23. The total score of these two schools would thus be 108. In a like manner the total score for all the colleges offering the curriculum would be discovered.

The entries in the column headed "Per cent" were determined by computing the ratio of the "Total score" to the "Total possible score." The entries in this column serve as indices for describing the comprehensiveness of the general education program.

The situation depicted by these figures is certainly not complimentary to the policy of junior colleges toward a comprehensive program of general education. No doubt it will be pointed out that such a technique obscures the probability that some of the schools included ranked much higher than the

percentage scores indicate. This observation is obviously true. Nevertheless, the fact that the scores are low indicates that the number of exceptional cases of this type is small.

The second question studied concerns the specific divisions of general education in the criterional list in which the junior college programs were most inadequate. A statistical treatment similar to that used in computing the data in the foregoing figures was used in obtaining the entries in the following table.

TABLE 1. ADEQUACY OF THE FIVE CURRICULUMS IN THE TEN MAJOR DIVISIONS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

| Curriculums                                       | Total possible score | Total score | Per cent |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>1. Adequacy in Health:</b>                     |                      |             |          |
| Arts and science ...                              | 651                  | 104         | 16.0     |
| General cultural ...                              | 336                  | 52          | 15.5     |
| General business ...                              | 357                  | 84          | 23.5     |
| Secretarial science ...                           | 567                  | 88          | 15.5     |
| Technology ...                                    | 168                  | 19          | 11.5     |
| All five curriculums                              | 2,079                | 347         | 16.5     |
| <b>2. Adequacy in Communication:</b>              |                      |             |          |
| Arts and science ...                              | 713                  | 174         | 24.5     |
| General cultural ...                              | 368                  | 71          | 19.5     |
| General business ...                              | 391                  | 57          | 14.5     |
| Secretarial science ...                           | 621                  | 129         | 21.0     |
| Technology ...                                    | 184                  | 11          | 6.0      |
| All five curriculums                              | 2,227                | 142         | 19.5     |
| <b>3. Adequacy in Personal-Social Adjustment:</b> |                      |             |          |
| Arts and science ...                              | 620                  | 112         | 18.0     |
| General cultural ...                              | 320                  | 43          | 13.5     |
| General business ...                              | 340                  | 18          | 5.5      |
| Secretarial science ...                           | 540                  | 57          | 10.5     |
| Technology ...                                    | 160                  | 10          | 6.5      |
| All five curriculums                              | 1,980                | 240         | 12.0     |
| <b>4. Adequacy in Family-Marital Adjustment:</b>  |                      |             |          |
| Arts and science ...                              | 744                  | 1           | 0.1      |
| General cultural ...                              | 384                  | 4           | 1.0      |
| General business ...                              | 408                  | 15          | 3.5      |
| Secretarial science ...                           | 648                  | 17          | 2.5      |
| Technology ...                                    | 192                  | ...         | ...      |
| All five curriculums                              | 2,376                | 37          | 1.5      |
| <b>5. Adequacy in Citizenship:</b>                |                      |             |          |
| Arts and science ...                              | 372                  | 68          | 18.5     |
| General cultural ...                              | 192                  | 30          | 15.5     |
| General business ...                              | 204                  | 33          | 16.0     |
| Secretarial science ...                           | 324                  | 40          | 12.5     |
| Technology ...                                    | 96                   | 16          | 16.5     |
| All five curriculums                              | 1,188                | 187         | 15.5     |

#### 6. Adequacy in Understanding the Environment:

|                         |       |    |     |
|-------------------------|-------|----|-----|
| Arts and science ...    | 496   | 40 | 8.0 |
| General cultural ...    | 256   | 11 | 4.5 |
| General business ...    | 272   | 13 | 5.0 |
| Secretarial science ... | 432   | 7  | 1.5 |
| Technology ...          | 128   | 3  | 2.5 |
| All five curriculums    | 1,584 | 74 | 4.5 |

#### 7. Adequacy in Appreciation of Literature:

|                         |       |     |      |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| Arts and science ...    | 341   | 47  | 14.0 |
| General cultural ...    | 176   | 13  | 7.5  |
| General business ...    | 187   | 14  | 7.5  |
| Secretarial science ... | 297   | 25  | 8.5  |
| Technology ...          | 88    | 1   | 1.0  |
| All five curriculums    | 1,089 | 100 | 9.0  |

#### 8. Adequacy in Fine Arts Appreciation:

|                         |       |     |     |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|-----|
| Arts and science ...    | 434   | 8   | 2.0 |
| General cultural ...    | 224   | 8   | 3.5 |
| General business ...    | 238   | 6   | 2.5 |
| Secretarial science ... | 378   | 11  | 3.0 |
| Technology ...          | 112   | ... | ... |
| All five curriculums    | 1,386 | 33  | 2.5 |

#### 9. Adequacy in Personal Philosophy:

|                         |       |    |     |
|-------------------------|-------|----|-----|
| Arts and science ...    | 651   | 33 | 5.0 |
| General cultural ...    | 336   | 19 | 5.5 |
| General business ...    | 357   | 11 | 3.0 |
| Secretarial science ... | 567   | 31 | 5.5 |
| Technology ...          | 168   | 2  | 1.0 |
| All five curriculums    | 2,079 | 96 | 4.5 |

#### 10. Adequacy in Vocational Choice:

|                         |       |    |     |
|-------------------------|-------|----|-----|
| Arts and science ...    | 961   | 13 | 1.5 |
| General cultural ...    | 496   | 7  | 1.5 |
| General business ...    | 527   | 19 | 3.5 |
| Secretarial science ... | 837   | 13 | 1.5 |
| Technology ...          | 248   | 4  | 1.5 |
| All five curriculums    | 3,069 | 56 | 2.0 |

A superficial examination of this table reveals that the areas of family-marital adjustment, understanding the environment, fine arts appreciation, personal philosophy, and vocational choice rank lowest; while the division ranking highest, communication, shows a score for the five curriculums of less than 20 per cent of the total possible score. Scores for individual curriculums vary even more widely. Generally the highest scores are made in the arts and science curriculum and the lowest in the technology curriculum.

The identification of deficiencies in the general education program of junior college graduates through an analysis of the courses which these graduates took while in junior college does not



invalidate the possibility that some or all of these identified deficiencies might be in areas of general education which received adequate attention in courses taken by the same graduates at the high school level. Data concerning the titles of high school courses taken therefore were obtained.

Unfortunately, resources in time and money were not available to afford the opportunity for learning the specific objectives set up for the high school courses. This situation, in the light of the question raised in the preceding paragraph, necessitated devising a technique which would make possible the circumvention of the problem created by the inability to secure a valid statement of the objectives of the high school courses. As is frequently the case when a technique has to be devised to replace another, the probability that the substitute technique will be as acceptable as the technique for which it is a substitute leaves serious questions to be answered. Such questions arise in connection with the procedure followed in considering the general education content of high school courses which have been identified by title only.

The technique used is based on the assumption that courses at each level bearing identical or similar titles will possess the same objectives. On this basis, since the titles of high school courses recurring most frequently in the junior college graduates' programs are known, although the objectives of these courses are unknown, and since both titles and objectives of the most frequently recurring junior college courses are known, acting on the assumption stated in this paragraph the known objectives of junior college courses are ascribed to the high school courses possessing identical or similar

titles. By this technique it is possible within the imposed limitations previously described to analyze the high school courses with a view to discovering their general education content. This analysis reveals the following:

1. Terminal students (those enrolled in general cultural, general business, secretarial science, and technology curriculums) spent proportionately more time in both high school and college in vocational-education courses.

2. The deficiencies in general education incurred by students enrolled in terminal curriculums were not as a whole offset by high school courses taken by these students, since their high school courses were also weighted with more vocational education courses than the transfer (arts and science) group.

3. The appearance of art as a course frequently recurring in the high school program suggests some compensation for a fine arts curriculum experience in college consisting predominantly of music courses.

4. Some compensation for the deficient contribution made by college courses to understanding the environment is provided by the existence of general science courses in the high school programs of many of the students.

5. There is no evidence to indicate that the high school program served to make up the inadequacies in coverage of family-marital adjustment, personal philosophy, and wise vocational choice in the college programs.

On the basis of the reported findings growing out of this study, the following conclusions appear to be warranted:

1. Junior colleges are falling far short in the matter of providing an adequate general education program.

2. Specific divisions of general education (as classified by the Objectives of General Education for Members of the Armed Forces) in which the greatest inadequacies are observed are: Family and marital adjustment, understanding the environment, fine arts appreciation, personal philosophy, and vocational choice.

3. A superficial examination of the high school courses of the junior college students involved in the study reveals little if any compensation provided for the deficiencies observed in the college program.

4. Junior college leadership, if it is serious about carrying out the purpose of rounding out the general education program of individuals, needs to give attention to a curriculum reorganization which will make effective this avowed aim of the institutions.



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# Inadequacies of General Education Programs

JAMES W. REYNOLDS

THE WRITER pointed out in an article appearing in last month's issue of the *Junior College Journal* that the policy of local public junior colleges concerning the curriculum experiences of their graduates does not provide for an adequate general education program. Moreover, it was shown that there is a definite probability that the specific deficiencies identified in the general education programs of these graduates are not compensated for by previous curriculum experiences received in high school. It was also indicated that junior college leaders have long subscribed to the principle of regarding this level of education as possessing the responsibility for rounding out the individual's program of general education. This discrepancy between theory and practice is not without cause, and it is the purpose of this paper to report the results of an investigation undertaken to discover the cause.

## *Description of Investigation*

The investigation consisted of two parts: (1) Conferences with junior college administrators and faculty members at 32 public junior colleges located in all sections of the country, and (2) questionnaires sent to 215 public junior colleges. In sending the questionnaires two forms were used: (a) a comprehensive inquiry was sent as a follow-up to the 32 institutions at

which conferences had been held, and (b) a shorter inquiry was sent to the 183 local public junior colleges listed in the *Junior College Directory, 1942* in addition to the group to which the follow-up questionnaire had been sent. Replies were received from 30 of the 32 colleges to which the follow-up inquiries were sent, and from 62 of the colleges to which the less comprehensive questionnaire was sent. Subsequent statistical compilations are based entirely on the questionnaire returns.

One feature of the comprehensive questionnaire which is also treated in the simpler inquiry is a request for comment on the statement, "*Every junior college should set up a comprehensive program of general education, satisfactory completion of which is an absolute requirement for graduation.*" Accompanying the questionnaire was the following broad description of the term *general education*:

I have defined "general education" broadly as being those curricular experiences in all areas such as citizenship, homemaking, worthy recreational interests, philosophy of life, and others which comprise the life needs of all people regardless of their economic or social status.

The wording of the statement does not represent a thesis which the writer would necessarily defend. It is so worded as to indicate an arbitrary and definite stand. This was done with the idea of avoiding a meaningless generality which would provoke little discriminative thought on the part of the respondent.

## *General Findings of Investigation*

In reporting the results of the inquiry, the colleges have been included

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JAMES W. REYNOLDS' research activity in connection with work on his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago forms a background for his series of two articles appearing in the *Journal*, of which this is the concluding one. Dr. Reynolds, formerly dean of Fort Smith Junior College, Arkansas, is now professor of education at the University of Georgia.

under two general headings. Those to which the follow-up questionnaire was sent are classified as the basic group, those to which the simpler form was sent as the supplementary group. A general summary of all the replies will be found below:

| <i>Nature of Expressed Opinion</i>          | <i>Basic Group</i> | <i>Supplementary Group</i> |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Approve without reservations                |                    | 12                         |
| Approve with reservations                   | 12                 | 28                         |
| Disapprove                                  | 1                  | 6                          |
| Indeterminate as to approval or disapproval |                    | 3                          |
| No comment made                             | 17                 | 13                         |
| Total                                       | 30                 | 62                         |

Of the administrators who made comment on the statement, an overwhelming proportion in both the basic and supplementary groups approved it. Even among the administrators who disapproved the statement, as will be indicated in a subsequent analysis, the reasons for disapproval cannot be construed as expressions of disapproval of including a general education program in the junior college.

Since this paper is concerned with an identification of causes for the inadequacy of the general education program in local public junior colleges, one turns logically to a breakdown of the comments included in the columns entitled, "Approve with Reservations" and "Disapprove." Such a breakdown is accomplished in Tables 1 and 2.

#### *Reservations Modifying Full Approval*

Table 1 considers the reservations of those administrators in the basic and supplementary groups who approved the statement with reservations. Table 2 includes the various reasons advanced by the administrators who expressed themselves as disapproving the statement.

TABLE 1. BREAKDOWN OF RESERVATIONS ACCOMPANYING APPROVAL OF STATEMENTS OF GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

#### *Reservations Regarding Terminal Students*

##### *Basic Group*

Should not be set up so as to exclude special vocational students who will not be graduated

Methods should be devised to convince student of its importance

##### *Supplementary Group*

Restrict to terminal students only

Terminal students' needs leave no time for general education

Terminal students will not take general education

#### *Reservations Regarding Transfer Students*

##### *Basic Group*

No reservations.

##### *Supplementary Group*

Prevented from taking general education by restrictions of senior colleges

Too much required general education would discourage students from entering science curriculum

Should apply to transfer students only

#### *Reservations Regarding Time Required*

##### *Basic Group*

Should be spread over 9th through 14th years

Continuation of and coordinate with secondary years immediately preceding junior college

Should be spread over Grades 7-14

Should be spread over secondary grades

##### *Supplementary Group*

Not more than 60 per cent of class time

Must not take too much time

Kept at a minimum

Must leave time to develop special interests

Must leave time for vocational education

#### *Reservations Regarding Requirements for Graduation*

##### *Basic Group*

As stated, defies reduction to terms sufficiently specific for translation to graduation requirements

##### *Supplementary Group*

Misunderstood

"Comprehensive" too large a term

Avoid compulsory features

#### *Reservations Regarding Development Within a College*

##### *Basic Group*

Should provide for individual differences



|                                                                                                                                            |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Should be assisted by functioning guidance and personnel program .....                                                                     | 1 |
| Should be presented so that students will appropriate and use the general education Curriculum set up on basis of student body needs ..... | 1 |
| Depends on comprehensive program of offerings, not a few required courses .....                                                            | 1 |
| Requires better teaching .....                                                                                                             | 1 |
| Involves a complete change in educational theory and school practice .....                                                                 | 1 |
| <i>Supplementary Group</i>                                                                                                                 |   |
| Prevented by school's "struggle for existence" .....                                                                                       | 1 |
| Must be developed slowly .....                                                                                                             | 1 |
| Should make provision for general education already received .....                                                                         | 2 |
| Should be outgrowth of preliminary study .....                                                                                             | 3 |
| Should be trimmed to local needs .....                                                                                                     | 2 |
| Should stress courses in citizenship, economics, and social relations .....                                                                | 1 |
| All terminal courses should have general education in their framework .....                                                                | 1 |
| Needs constant refashioning once adopted .....                                                                                             | 1 |

#### *Miscellaneous Reservations*

##### *Basic Group*

|                                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|
| Not practical in a technical institute ...          | 1 |
| State laws restrict accomplishment of program ..... | 1 |
| Should make exception of those handicapped .....    | 1 |

##### *Supplementary Group*

No reservations.

An examination of the breakdown of the reservations contained in Table 1 makes one aware immediately of the fact that there is no unanimity of opinion, some comments going so far as to be contradictory of others. An example of the contradiction involved in the comments is observed under the categories of those comments dealing with terminal and transfer students made by administrators in the supplementary group. One advocates limiting the required general education program to the terminal students only, two others say that the necessary curriculum which terminal students must take leaves no time for general education, a fourth states it as his opinion that terminal students will not take general education courses, while a fifth advocates limiting

general education courses to transfer students only. In overcoming this conflicting testimony, if such is desirable, perhaps the best suggestion is that made by one of the administrators in the basic group of colleges:

Broadly speaking, I believe that such [general education required for graduation] should be the case. At present, our faculty is concerned with the method of presenting such a program which will be acceptable to many who are taking the shorter vocational courses. In other words, how may we convince these students of the value of general education and get them to take the time to acquire it.

Comments classified as applying to terminal students do not appear among those made by the administrators from the basic group of colleges. However, among the supplementary group comments classifiable under this heading were made by eight junior college leaders. With the exception of one comment urging general education for transfer students only, the comments strongly emphasize the existence of a barrier to a compulsory program of general education in the form of senior college requirements. Administrators whose comments stress this condition do not discuss their statements further, since no elaboration was requested, but experience suggests this barrier probably exists in the shape of (1) refusal to accept on transfer certain general education courses, or (2) the setting up of certain prerequisite introductory courses in preparatory education as a basis for admission to senior college advanced standing.

Under the heading of "Time Required," administrators in the basic group made comments all of which stressed the importance of extending the period to be devoted to accomplishing the comprehensive program of general education over a broader segment of the secondary school level than that

involved in the traditional junior college years comprising Grades 13 and 14. The comments made by representatives of the supplementary group urged that limitations be imposed on the proportion of time devoted to general education in the junior college.

The fourth category concerns the concept implied in that part of the statement which reads, "... a comprehensive program of general education as an absolute requirement for graduation." The comments classifiable under this heading in the basic and supplementary groups have little in common, except that four of the comments made by administrators in the supplementary group indicate that the above quotation was interpreted differently from the way in which it was intended.

The component parts of the comments classified under the heading, "Development of Program within a School," with one exception deal with broad aspects of general education. The one exception is the first of those in the supplementary group, in which the administrator expressed his approval of the statement but asserted that he was prevented from any hope of realization of the program by his "struggle for existence." Some of the comments listed under the basic group are definitely related to some made by representatives of the supplementary group, as in the case of the relationship between the first statement in the basic group and the second in the supplementary group; and between the fourth in the basic group and fifth in the supplementary group.

The fact that none of the comments in either the basic or supplementary group appears to contradict any other comment is a matter of interest. By a process of synthesis, one might con-

struct a rationale for developing a program of general education within a junior college. However, the evidence in the form in which it exists does not warrant labeling this rationale as representative of the prevailing attitude among junior college administrators, although such status might be achieved for the comments if they were submitted in a checklist to junior college administrators for expressions of approval or disapproval.

The three comments listed under the category "Miscellaneous" need no further explanation. The third, incidentally, is a bit confusing as to meaning owing to the uncertainty of the exact interpretation to be applied to the term "those handicapped."

#### *Disapproval of Compulsory Program*

Table 2, as has been described, deals with the reasons advanced by those who disapprove the statement. An examination of the component parts making up these reasons produces only two categories under which the parts can be classified; in reality, only one, since the heading "Miscellaneous" lacks finesse as a definite term and may be properly considered as a catch-all.

The point has been intimated previously that the reasons advanced by those who disapproved cannot actually be construed as expressions of disapproval of general education *per se*. This point is borne out by an examination of the reasons listed in Table 2. The only reason advanced by a member of the basic group, and all five of the reasons classified under the heading, "Organization and Curriculum," in the supplementary group, are based on an objection, either stated directly or implied, to the use of the idea of compulsion involving completion of a comprehensive program of general education as an *absolute requirement* for



graduation. The two comments included under the heading "Miscellaneous" are not directly opposed to the concept of general education in the junior college. On the basis of this analysis, one may conclude correctly that there is no disapproval of general education in junior colleges, but only to the practice of making the completion of a comprehensive program of general education an absolute requirement for graduation.

TABLE 2. BREAKDOWN OF REASONS FOR DIS-  
APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF GENERAL  
EDUCATION PROGRAM

| Reasons Involving Curriculum                                                                                                                           |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Basic Group                                                                                                                                            |   |
| Preprofessional and professional curricu-<br>lums are already so long that addition of<br>general education requirements would be<br>intolerable ..... | 1 |
| Supplementary Group                                                                                                                                    |   |
| Absolute requirements <i>per se</i> are unde-<br>sirable .....                                                                                         | 2 |
| High school is the level for required<br>general education .....                                                                                       | 1 |
| Takes insufficient account of individual<br>differences .....                                                                                          | 1 |
| Setting up a required program suggests<br>too much of omniscience of faculty .....                                                                     | 1 |
| Community demands academic courses<br>for transfer students and general courses<br>for terminal students .....                                         | 1 |
| Miscellaneous Reasons for Disapproval                                                                                                                  |   |
| Basic Group                                                                                                                                            |   |
| None.                                                                                                                                                  |   |
| Supplementary Group                                                                                                                                    |   |
| College needs to expand first .....                                                                                                                    | 1 |
| Would be impractical .....                                                                                                                             | 1 |

Reasons for Inadequacy

The final portion of this paper is devoted to a reconsideration of the reservations accompanying approval of the statement as well as the reasons for disapproval with a view to discovering clues to explain the paradox which exists in theory and practice concerning general education in the local public junior college.

Two ideas that help provide a suggestion for the reason for the divergence of theory and practice may be found in the classifications of the reservations under the heading "Terminal Students" and "Transfer Students." One grows out of the distinction observed between these two groups, a distinction implying sufficient cleavage to justify ascribing differing needs to each. If these needs differ sharply, then the conclusion follows that any attempt to set up a program common to both groups is to be hindered by these differences. The second idea concerns the point made by several of the administrators in the supplementary group to the effect that one of the barriers to the realization of a comprehensive general education program is the existence of certain requirements set up by senior colleges.

A third clue to an explanation for the difference between theory and practice is the one that underlies the central points emphasized by the basic and supplementary group representatives in the category of time required to accomplish the general education program. The statement has been made that the central themes subscribed to by each group are unrelated. In a sense, however, these themes stem from a common source. Each is the outgrowth of an idea the essence of which is the lack of sufficient time in Grades 13 and 14 to provide adequate curriculum experiences for the student to meet the requirements of a comprehensive program of general education. The administrators of the basic group suggest a remedy for this theoretical problem in the form of spreading the general education program over a larger portion of the secondary school years. Representatives of the supplementary group provide no remedy but seek to

protect vocational and preparatory education from encroachment by general education, an encroachment which is inevitable if one subscribes to the theory of the desirability of a comprehensive program of general education and aims to accomplish this program at the junior college level only.

Other clues of lesser significance can be deduced from the evidence. The belief is held, however, that the three which have been listed and described are the most important explanations. One might use the term "experiential considerations" as a collective title to include these three ideas. In any event, the implications of these ideas provide a satisfactory explanation for the disparity between theory and practice observed in the approval which local public junior colleges accord the idea of a comprehensive general education program and the unsatisfactory record which these same junior colleges have compiled in providing such a program.

In summary, one may, on the basis of the findings reported, explain the

inadequacy of the general education program in local public junior colleges on the basis of the following conditions:

1. The assignment to terminal and transfer students of sharply divergent educational needs, with the inferred difficulty in providing in the individual junior college a program which will satisfy the needs of both groups.
2. The requirements which senior colleges set up for admission to advanced standing.
3. The belief that a comprehensive program of general education cannot be accomplished within the two year span defined by Grades 13 and 14.

It remains for junior college leadership to determine whether these causes are insurmountable. If such is the case, then a respect for reality dictates a policy by which junior colleges will cease proclaiming as a purpose the act of rounding out the individual's general education program. If, however, these causes do not present insurmountable barriers, then the same respect for reality dictates that more junior colleges do what a few such institutions have already done, find a method by which these barriers may be effectively removed.







